

Claims

- [c1] An apparatus for monitoring the closed position of a fuel cap relative to a tank connection pipe, comprising:
 a fuel cap;
 a tank connection pipe having a wall;
 ratchet means connected to the fuel cap for controlling tightening of the fuel cap to the tank connection pipe;
 a magnet connected to the fuel cap;
 a magnetic switch connected to the tank connection pipe; and
 means for sensing abrupt movement of the magnet relative to the magnetic switch, indicating a locked fuel cap condition, by sensing an abrupt change in magnetic field strength of the magnet.

- [c2] The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the magnetic switch is a reed switch.

- [c3] The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the reed switch is a form A, normally open, reed switch.

- [c4] The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the magnetic switch is embedded within the wall of the tank connection pipe.

- [c5] The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the fuel cap includes male threading engageable with female threading on an interior surface of the wall of the tank connection pipe.

- [c6] A method for monitoring the closed position of a fuel cap relative to a tank connection pipe, comprising the steps of:
 providing a fuel cap;
 providing a tank connection pipe;
 providing a magnet connected to the fuel cap;
 providing a magnetic switch connected to the tank connection pipe; and
 sensing abrupt movement of the magnet relative to the magnetic switch, indicating a tightened fuel cap condition, by sensing an abrupt change in magnetic field strength of the magnet.

- [c7] The method of Claim 6, wherein the step of sensing abrupt movement further

comprises the steps of:

- providing a circuit with a pickup coil and an output;
- snapping the fuel cap into a rest condition;
- inducing a current pulse in the pickup coil;
- sensing the current pulse;
- producing a logic level high voltage at the output; and
- displaying an indication of a tightened fuel cap condition.

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